

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for failsoft headend operation in a complex,
2 multiple location consumer communication and content delivery system, the system
3 including a plurality of headend facilities, the system further including a central
4 facility including a central database, and the system further including a distributed
5 information technology (IT) architecture wherein a back office IT infrastructure is
6 located at the central facility and wherein each headend facility includes a headend
7 IT infrastructure, the method comprising:

8 providing a policy to a headend IT infrastructure, the policy defining
9 policy limits for transactions that normally require real-time access to the central
10 database; and

11 handling real-time transactions with the headend IT infrastructure,
12 without real-time access to the central database, in accordance with the policy limits.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 handling non-real-time transactions at least partially with the back
3 office IT infrastructure.

1 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 handling real-time transactions at least partially with the back office
3 IT infrastructure, with real-time access to the central database, for real-time
4 transactions that fall outside of the policy limits.

1 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 determining an availability of access to the central database from the
3 headend facility; and
4 in the event that access to the central database is unavailable, handling
5 real-time transactions with the headend IT infrastructure, without real-time access
6 to the central database, in accordance with the policy limits, thereby providing
7 failsoft headend facility operation.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the headend
2 facilities is for a cable television system.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the central database is realized
2 as a relational database.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the central database is realized
2 as an LDAP / X.500 directory.

1 8. A method for failsoft headend operation in a complex,
2 multiple location consumer communication and content delivery system, the system
3 including a plurality of headend facilities, the system further including a central
4 facility including a central database, and the system further including a distributed
5 information technology (IT) architecture wherein a back office IT infrastructure is
6 located at the central facility and wherein each headend facility includes a headend
7 IT infrastructure, the method comprising:

8 for each headend facility, providing a policy to the associated
9 headend IT infrastructure, the policy defining policy limits for transactions that
10 normally require real-time access to the central database; and

11 for each headend facility, in the event that access to the central
12 database is unavailable, handling real-time transactions with the associated headend
13 IT infrastructure, without real-time access to the central database, in accordance
14 with the associated policy limits, thereby providing failsoft headend facility
15 operation.

1 9. The method of claim 8 further comprising:
2 for each headend facility, handling non-real-time transactions at least
3 partially with the back office IT infrastructure.

1 10. The method of claim 8 further comprising:
2 for each headend facility, handling real-time transactions at least
3 partially with the back office IT infrastructure, with real-time access to the central
4 database, for real-time transactions that fall outside of the associated policy limits.

1 11. The method of claim 8 wherein at least one of the headend
2 facilities is for a cable television system.

1 12. The method of claim 8 wherein the system is a cable television
2 network and the headend facilities for cable television systems.

1 13. The method of claim 8 wherein the central database is realized
2 as a relational database.

1 14. The method of claim 8 wherein the central database is realized
2 as an LDAP / X.500 directory.

1 15. A complex, multiple location consumer communication and
2 content delivery system, the system comprising:
3 a plurality of headend facilities;
4 a central facility including a central database;
5 a distributed information technology (IT) architecture wherein a back
6 office IT infrastructure is located at the central facility and wherein each headend
7 facility includes a headend IT infrastructure; and
8 wherein at least one headend IT infrastructure is provided with a
9 policy defining policy limits for transactions that normally require real-time access
10 to the central database, and is programmed to handle real-time transactions, without
11 real-time access to the central database, in accordance with the policy limits.

1 16. The system of claim 15 wherein the at least one headend IT
2 infrastructure is programmed to handle non-real-time transactions at least partially
3 with the back office IT infrastructure.

1 17. The system of claim 15 wherein the at least one headend IT
2 infrastructure is programmed to handle real-time transactions at least partially with
3 the back office IT infrastructure, with real-time access to the central database, for
4 real-time transactions that fall outside of the policy limits.

1 18. The system of claim 15 wherein the at least one headend IT
2 infrastructure is programmed to determine an availability of access to the central
3 database, and in the event that access to the central database is unavailable, handle
4 real-time transactions, without real-time access to the central database, in
5 accordance with the policy limits, thereby providing failsoft headend facility
6 operation.

1 19. The system of claim 15 wherein at least one of the headend
2 facilities is for a cable television system.

1 20. The system of claim 15 wherein the central database is
2 realized as a relational database.

1 21. The system of claim 15 wherein the central database is
2 realized as an LDAP / X.500 directory.